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San Antonio Express-News

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Mostly cloudy: High 90, Low 72

Coronavirus at a glance

1,831,806	67,527	2,882	106,180	1,718	75
Confirmed cases in U.S.	In Texas	In Bexar County	Deaths in U.S.	In Texas	In Bexar County

Source: WHO, CDC, Johns Hopkins University

Brakes slammed on transit plan

Mayor cites need for virus recovery

By Joshua Fechter
STAFF WRITER

In a stunning move, Mayor Ron Nirenberg has abandoned a plan for expanded public transit that had been expected to go before voters on the November ballot.

The mayor made the announcement in his televised State of the City address Tuesday night.

Nirenberg and Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff had sought to reroute $40 million in sales taxes that buys land to protect the city's primary source of clean drinking water, the Edwards Aquifer, to fund more bus service and other transportation initiatives instead.

Instead, Nirenberg will leave the door open to use those dollars to fund economic recovery efforts for residents and businesses hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic – though it's unlikely any such proposal will go before voters this year.

"This is a painful but necessary decision for us," Nirenberg said in a primetime address. "But direct action to ensure a healthful economic recovery means rebuilding now. We will take the time we need to fully understand the depth of the pandemic's financial damage before making new investments."

Before the pandemic hit, Nirenberg and Wolff intended to bring the transportation measure to voters in November.

But the economic turmoil resulting from COVID-19 combined with efforts to contain it put the initiative's future in doubt. For one thing, the pan-

Transit continues on A10

Mayor Ron Nirenberg called it "a painful but necessary decision for us."

Josie Norris / Staff Photographer

Kassidy Munoz, center, grins as she tosses her cap into the air following the Harlandale High School graduation ceremony held at Memorial Stadium. The district was one of the first to plan an outdoor graduation.

SOCIALLY DISTANT, GRADS ARE TOGETHER

Harlandale High School diplomas are handed out in football stadium

By Krista Torralva
STAFF WRITER

Despite the warm humidity, approaching rain and a spotty-sounding microphone on the stage, Melanie Barrientos was grateful she got to watch her daughter, Ashley Barrientos, receive her Harlandale High School diploma Tuesday morning.

Like with any normal graduation, the run-up was chaos, with every member of the family fighting for the bathroom and deciding on a last-minute outfit change.

When Ashley's name was called, the cheering was loud and proud. And lunch with the newly minted graduate would be at family-favorite restaurant.

But unlike any graduation before, the 400 seniors had gathered to celebrate their accomplishment under constraints imposed by the coronavirus pandemic.

That they could be together at all – with an audience watching in a football stadium – took some careful crowd calibration by the Harlandale ISD, the first local school district to do the math, announce such a plan and carry it out.

Many of the Harlandale High grads wore masks as they took their seats on the gridiron 6 feet apart, each supplied with a water bottle. Large power fans blew from the sidelines, but they sweated beneath their caps and gowns.

Guests were limited to four per graduate, and households were separated in the stands. Some opened umbrellas against the sun – the rain held off just long enough.

Harlandale continues on A9

Yatziri Fuentes, 18, kneels during the National Anthem at the commencement ceremony.

More inside

» *How you can be tested.* **A2**
» *No new deaths in week.* **A3**
» *County OKs spending.* **A3**
» *Food box output low.* **A17**
» *School meals to continue.* **A17**
» *WHO was displeased.* **A19**
» *Vaccine an 'experiment.'* **A19**
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» *City of Light brighter.* **A21**
» *The Texas tallies.* **A22**

S.A.-built Tacoma's sales are booming

Despite pandemic, pickup records its best May ever

By Randy Diamond
STAFF WRITER

Americans' love of pickups is the only saving grace of the U.S. auto industry at the moment – a point highlighted Tuesday when Toyota Motor Corp. announced its San Antonio-made Tacoma scored its strongest-ever May sales, despite the economic catastrophe brought on by the novel coronavirus.

Another sign the truck market is reviving: the Japanese automaker said it will bring 392 contract workers, who were laid off in April, back to work at its South Side plant. They'll return to their jobs over the next two weeks.

"Demand is picking up faster than we originally expected, which means more truck production," said Kevin Voelkel, president of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Texas. "As we continue to ramp up production, our focus will remain on the health and safety of our team members."

Overall, Toyota laid off 5,000 contract workers

Tacoma continues on A9

Houston remembrance

Elizabeth Conley / Staff photographer

Members of George Floyd's family address a crowd of thousands in Houston. The man who died during an arrest in Minneapolis grew up in the Bayou City. Metro, A4

Wearing masks no longer rule at H-E-B stores

By Diego Mendoza-Moyers
STAFF WRITER

H-E-B no longer is requiring customers to wear face masks to enter its grocery stores, a company spokeswoman said Tuesday.

Many thousands of shoppers pass through the stores every day – H-E-B controlled nearly half of the San Antonio market last year. Most have grown accustomed to the masked strangers they have to skirt to get to the milk and eggs.

And the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still urges people to wear face covers in public spaces to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The San Antonio grocery chain said it, too, strongly encourages customers to wear the masks – but won't deny entry to someone who isn't wearing one.

All H-E-B employees and vendors will continue to wear masks.

The change in store policy came after Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order in April preventing

H-E-B continues on A10

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